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Smith's strictures on the French people of Canada; and while he admits that they are less successful in accumulating wealth than men of the Anglo-Saxon race, and that they are too much under the influence of the priests, he maintains that they are, on the whole, as good citizens as any others. On the question of annexation, he thinks the French are tending toward a decision in its favor, largely because so many of them have already settled in New England, and so have become familiar with life in the States. Mrs. J. C. Croly writes on "Domestic Service," expressing the opinion that mistresses usually expect too much of their servants, — as much as could be expected of trained experts; and, furthermore, that the servant-girl is too often not treated, as she should be, like any hired laborer, but rather as a dependent. To these causes Mrs. Croly attributes many of the troubles that ladies have with their servants. The other papers in the *Forum* deal with familiar subjects, and call for no special remark.

— It cannot be said that in these days there is any lack of high-class reviews, but their cost is prohibitive to the great mass of the people. A high standard of excellence, and a cultivated literary taste, are no longer confined to the few; while a keen anxiety to become acquainted with the ideas of the foremost men of the day on the many vital problems now before the world is developing among a class unable to purchase the periodicals in which alone these subjects are handled. The object of *The New Review* (Longmans, Green, & Co., London and New York) is to place a critical periodical of the first order within the reach of all; and the preliminary list of writers is a sufficient proof that it will not yield to any in the eminence of its contributors. The public will be brought into direct contact with the most representative men of the age. Politics, science, and art will be treated by writers of acknowledged repute; and literature, both critical and creative, sober and fanciful, will be associated with names which have long carried their own commendation. Brevity as well as cheapness will be one of the distinguishing features of the new enterprise. The second number, to be published early in July, will contain, "The Shah," by the Right Hon. Lord Castletown; "Matthew Arnold," by the lord chief justice of England; "The Eiffel Tower," by M. Eiffel; "The Eight Hours Bill," by Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.; "The Higher Policy for Africa," by Sir G. Baden-Powell, M.P.; "The Talkers of London;" "Greyfriars," by St. George Mivart,

F.R.S.; "The Dying Drama," by William Archer; "Three Types of Womanhood," by the Countess of Cork.

— A natural-history serial, "Among the Florida Keys," by Charles Frederick Holder, describing the strange adventures and observations of a party of boys during a vacation trip in Florida, begins in the July number of *St. Nicholas*, and will continue for four months.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

* Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Queries.

45. IS THE HUMAN VOICE GROWING, OR DECAYING? — In his article on speech and song, in the *Contemporary Review*, Sir Morell Mackenzie writes, "Before leaving the subject of the speaking voice, a word or two may be said on what is more a matter of curious speculation than of practical interest. Is the human voice growing in power and beauty, or is it tending to decay? Certain physiologists assure us that the retina has acquired the power of distinguishing colors by degrees, and that the process will probably continue, so that our descendants will by and by evolve the power of seeing colors now quite unknown to us. On the other hand, it is undeniable that civilization, so far from increasing the keenness of our sight, threatens to make spectacles universally necessary. There can be no doubt that the voice has developed greatly since our 'half-human ancestors' wooed each other in the primeval forests, and it is conceivable that it may in time to come acquire the power of producing musical effects at present undreamt of. It is also probable enough, that, as the voice gains in sweetness, it may lose in power, the latter quality being more required in barbarous than in highly civilized conditions. On the other hand, we are taller and of larger chest-girth than our predecessors even of a not very remote date: it is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the average lungs and larynx are bigger nowadays, and the air-blast from the lungs stronger. This would appear to justify us in believing that the voice is stronger than it was even two or three centuries ago. There are, however, no facts that I know of to prove it." Cannot some of the readers of *Science* throw light on this?

X.

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